

Creative Action in Public Space

UHON 302-018 | T | 5:00-7:30 | SHC 12 | 43649

Fulfills A&S Group VII: Fine Arts

Michael Borowski

It has been said that art is not a mirror to reflect the world, but a hammer with which to shape it. This seminar “picks up” the metaphor of art as a societal tool and will question what use creative practices might have in contemporary culture. Are there situations in which we need a different instrument? Could art be a bandage? A trowel? A telephone? And then again, sometimes what you really need is a hammer.

This seminar will explore contemporary art and design in the public sphere. Together we will ask ourselves what it means to be an individual and part of a community. We will research how creative actions have been used to address social problems, as well as develop and implement our own projects. Students will be encouraged to pursue creative activity in broadly defined terms: written, sensory, performative, spatial, virtual, etc. The classroom will be our home base for discussions, presentations and workshops. Our real work will happen, well, somewhere else.

Readings

Our primary materials will be case studies of various art and design projects in public space. These will range from monuments (Richard Serra, Rachel Whiteread) to street art (Banksy, JR), to community-based projects (Harrell Fletcher, Suzanne Lacy). We will also be reading scholarly texts, catalog essays, and artist manifestos regarding the public sphere and the role of creative work outside of the gallery.

Requirements

Students will act as a creative collaborative, a kind of experimental community design lab. Artistic ability, while certainly beneficial, is not required. Creativity, divergent thinking, passion, and experimentation are the skills that will be necessary and fostered throughout this course. The first part of the class will require individual students to lead discussions, give a presentation, reflect and develop their own approach to creative action through weekly writing. Eventually the class will become more project oriented, in which students will need to work together effectively to research, generate ideas, problem-solve, and execute a collaborative project.

About the Instructor

Michael Borowski is an interdisciplinary artist and educator whose work addresses the psychology of spaces, home and displacement, and how objects and architecture mediate human relationships. His work has been exhibited nationally. He holds an MFA from the University of Michigan, and a BFA from the University of New Mexico. He was a graduate of the UNM Honors Program in 2003.

300-Levels